

News Release

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Learning the Facts About Domestic Violence

(Tampa, Florida June, 2013). The American Psychological Association has an online brochure titled “Intimate Partner Violence: Facts and Resources” that presents significant information regarding the occurrence of domestic violence and provides a number of resources.

According to this resource approximately 33% of women and 25% of men have been victims of rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. It is important to remember that this may be an under estimate due to the fact that many victims of domestic violence do not report their abuse. Also, due to how different individuals define domestic violence, some are in fact victims but what they are experiencing does not fall within how they would define it. This violence occurs regardless of age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability or sexual orientation. It has been determined, however, that an individual’s risk of experiencing intimate partner violence increases based on lower socio-economic status, low educational levels, being an adolescent/young adult, female and/or substance dependency.

It is now estimated that 20% of teen high school students experience abuse physically and/or sexually by a dating partner but often cover up what is occurring. In some cases they blame themselves or believe that they have done something to warrant the abuse. It is estimated that women who consider their mental health to be poor are three times more likely to experience abuse when compared to women whose mental health is good and women with disabilities have a 40% greater risk of severe violence.

Even more serious is the fact that 74% of all murder/suicides involve an intimate partner. It is even more significant that 96% of these victims were women who were killed by their intimate partner. This averages out to more than three women a day being murdered by an intimate partner.

Factors that increase an individual’s potential of becoming an abuser include low socio-economic status and academic achievement; aggressive behavior as a youth and heavy substance use; emotional difficulties including depression, anger, and hostility; poor social behaviors, unemployment and prior history of being abusive. These individuals are often emotionally dependent and insecure yet in their relationships have well defined expectations within relationships regarding gender roles and tend to believe in and act with male dominance. These individuals have a strong desire for power and control. They have usually

witnessed this occurring in the relationships of significant individuals or have themselves been childhood victims of abuse.

We have all heard the phrase “sticks and stones can break your bones but names will never hurt you.” This is not true because verbal abuse is a form of domestic violence. It is often a method used by an abuser to break down one’s sense of self which in the long run can be a contributing factor in being unable to leave a violent situation. The difficulty leaving such a situation is further exacerbated when an intimate partner has tried to isolate their partner by keeping them away from family or friends, constant monitoring of activities and contacts, or even threatening to harm themselves because of something the partner might choose to do. Sometimes the behavior and threats become so dangerous that they threaten to harm a family member, friend or even a pet.

An individual that has experienced the ups and downs of such an abusive relationship often experiences depression and anxiety sometimes to the point where they see suicide as the only way out. Their self esteem diminishes, they have difficulty with trust issues and often engage in self-defeating behaviors. Often their health is significantly impacted and the abuse may lead to post traumatic stress.

Family members and friends often become upset and frustrated because they cannot understand why an individual stays in such a situation. It is usually because one’s self-esteem is so diminished and the individual’s access to what they might need to leave has been controlled and made unavailable.

What can you do if you recognize yourself or a loved one who is caught in the cycle domestic violence? Call your EAP. You can explore in a confidential setting the concerns that you have and receive assistance to determine how to remain safe. Remember that when you need to sort out your feelings about what is happening in your life help is a phone call away. The EAP can help you find a new path so that the changes you need to make can be managed. Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a benefit available to you and your dependents Help is available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Other resources provided by the American Psychological Association are listed below.

EAP is a tool for personal and professional growth. Above all, keep in mind that concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. The EAP representative will help you find the best solution for your particular situation and help is just a phone call away. Call: (813) 870-0392 (Hillsborough County, Florida), (727) 576-5164 (Pinellas County, Florida), or (800) 343-4670 (out of area toll free).

Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a benefit available to all employees and dependents of companies contracted with Wood & Associates for providing EAP services.

Resources

- [ADWAS: Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services](#)
Provides comprehensive services to deaf and deaf-blind victims/survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking.
- [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)
Works to educate the public on how to recognize domestic violence and what to do about it; teen dating violence; the impact of family violence on children; and domestic violence against individuals with disabilities, older adults, and other marginalized populations.
- [VAWnet: The National Online Resources Center on Violence Against Women](#)
Provides a comprehensive and easily accessible collection of full-text, searchable electronic materials and resources on domestic violence, sexual violence, and related issues.
- [Women of Color Network \(WOCN\)](#)
Promotes and supports the leadership of women of color advocates.

About Wood & Associates

Wood & Associates is an Employee Assistance Program and behavioral health consulting firm that helps employers maintain productivity, safety and behavioral health in the workplace. Wood & Associates is a pioneer in the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) industry and has served employers and employees in the greater Tampa Bay area and nationwide since 1982. The firm's diverse group of clients includes a number of major employers who also contract for its mental health and substance abuse services.

Gary L. Wood, Psy.D., founder of the Wood & Associates consulting practice, is a pioneer in the field of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services. Since 1979, his practice has centered on providing solutions to employee and organizational problems. Wood is a licensed clinical psychologist, a member of the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, and a graduate of Rutgers University, West Georgia College and Mercer University.

Patricia N. Alexander earned a Ph.D. in mental health counseling at the University of Florida. Trained in critical incident stress management through the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, she is a Florida Licensed Mental Health Counselor and nationally certified counselor. Through her work experience she has addressed all types of critical incident situations, including explosions, multiple homicides, suicides, line-of-duty deaths, serious accidents and robberies. Alexander conducts training on stress management for law enforcement and businesses, and has developed peer support programs for law enforcement and industry. Alexander is an educator and consultant on a wide variety of behavioral health concerns.